Earthquake-proof railway structures

3650. SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to build all railway structures and building in future in strict earthquake-proof specifications;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what specific steps are being taken in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) to (c) Sir, the structures and buildings are designed as per provision of codes and manuals. The earthquake forces provided for in the codes/manuals are duly taken into account in the designs and constructions.

Railway factory at Jammu

3651. MIRZA ABDUL RASHID: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be leased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Railways has acquired precious land at Jammu Railway Station for installing a factory, on the analogy of Kapoorthala; and

(b) if so, what is the proposal or project of Government in this regard; if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) No, Sir. Presently, there is no plan to set up a new Coach Factory anywhere in India.

(b) Does not arise.

Extension of Haridwar bound trains upto Rishikesh

3652. SHRI RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to extend trains beyond Haridwar upto Rishikesh in view of the importance of Rishikesh-the Gateway of Chardham;

(b) if so, the trains to be so extended; and

(c) by when the services would become available?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Agreement between Government and Railwaymen's Unions

3653. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the unions of Railwaymen have critisized Government for not implementing the 1997 agreement reached between Government and the employees;

(b) if so, the reasons for not implementing the agreement;

(c) whether Railwaymen's unions have expressed opposition to privatisation of catering and station maintenance work; and

(d) if so, what is Government's reaction to these demands?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) and (b) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The decision to privatize the catering services on Indian Railways was taken in the year 1992. The organized labour have been taken into confidence in this regard from the very beginning and their opposition to the move and demand for security to the employees of the departmental units had been deliberated with them at great length. Ministry of Railways have assured job security of the personnel working in Catering Department including Commission bearers/vendors. Necessary action has been taken to absorb them in catering as well as in other departments of Indian Railways.

As regards station maintenance work, there is, at present, no move to privatize the same.

Gauge conversion in Gujarat

3654. DR. A. K. PATEL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Railways have received any proposal from Gujarat Government for conversion of MG/NG lines into B.G; if so, the details thereof and the decision taken by the Railways on them;

(b) whether the Ministry of Railways has any plan of taking up any